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ABSTRACT

A study examined the portrait of the woman journalist as revealed through the autobiographies of eight women journalists whose careers spanned the decades of the 1920s and 1930s. The portrait was derived from several factors in the autobiographies: education and career commitment, character of personality traits, jobs in the profession, statements of attitudes about women and women journalists, personal life and its influence on career, and factors that may have to do with being female. The portrait was then compared with that portrayed in fiction, which was assumed to reflect the attitude of the society toward women journalists. Findings showed that (1) the declining professional commitment of women journalists portrayed in the fiction was not reinforced in the personal histories; (2) the autobiographies showed diversity of women's positions in their profession, but the women remained assigned primarily to features and women's news, as the fiction portrayed; (3) both fiction and autobiographies associated women with stereotypes; and (4) both showed their assignments primarily to be what was thought of as women's issues rather than issues of general interest. (HOD)

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QUALITATIVE STUDIES

THE WOMAN JOURNALIST OF THE 1920s AND 1930s IN FICTION AND IN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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The woman journalist's professional activities have only recently begun to be studied as matters of history.[1] Because of the failure of historians in the past to record women's activities and to perserve their work, contemporary research into women's history frequently relies on secondary sources such as social and psychological histories.[2] Sources of this type--autobiographies and popular fiction--are used in this paper to determine from the woman journalist's own account, the position of women in the profession, and to compare these self-perceptions with the cultural view of the woman journalist reflected in the contemporaneous popular fiction in an effort to arrive at a clearer understanding of the history of the woman journalist.[3]

The image of the competent woman journalist in American popular fiction reflects the positive cultural attitude toward her.[4] She is far stronger than other women in fiction, who more closely reflect the cultural stereotype of woman as passive, dependent, weak, and "feminine." In general, women journalists in fiction are intelligent, courageous, professional, independent, and ambitious. The fiction also shows, however, that these characteristics (most of which belong to the cultural stereotype of the male) often cause women loss of happiness because such women do not conform to the cultural ideal of women. They frequently fail, for example, to fulfill their stereotypical primary needs to be wives and mothers.

This fictional portrait reflects the cultural view but not necessarily women's real experiences. Literature generally describes "images" of women as they relate with men rather than explains women in terms of inner motivation as they deal directly with the world.[5] Women's autobiographies show women journalists to be concerned with their careers and interested in women's issues and friendships with women. Both fiction and autobiographies of women journalists reveal

strong, independent, courageous, intelligent and committed professionals. Both sources associate women with attitudes that identify them with stereotypical sex roles or characteristics. Whereas fiction often portrays them as stereotypes, the autobiographies describe their struggles against these cultural attitudes that frequently interfere with their professional goals. In both sources, women are compared to men and are forced to "prove themselves to be as good as men."

Eight autobiographies by women who spent the major part of their careers during the 1920s and the 1930s were chosen for this study. The 1920s offered unprecedented opportunity to women journalists because of the popularity of magazines and the insatiable public demand for news, especially the zany, the sensational, the emotional, and the scandalous. Several pioneer women journalists of this period later recorded their experiences in autobiographies.

The portrait of the woman journalist was derived by examining several factors in the autobiographies: her education and career commitment, her character or personality traits, her jobs in the profession, statements of attitudes about women and women journalists--either attitudes of others toward her or her attitudes toward other women journalists, her personal life and its influence, if any, on her career, and any factors in her job that may have to do with her sex. The portrait that emerged was then compared with the image portrayed in fiction.

The eight women journalists are:

Margaret Anderson, book reviewer and editor and publisher of Little Review

Edna Lee Booker, reporter on the China Press and correspondent for International News Service

Fanny Butcher, book reviewer and literary editor for the Chicago Tribune

Bess Furman, political reporter with Associated Press in Washington, D.C.

Mary Knight, correspondent with United Press International Paris Bureau

Mary Margaret McBride, reporter for the New York Daily News

Kathleen Ann Smallzried, reporter for the South Bend News-Times, later Woman's Page editor.

Agness Underwood, first woman city editor--Los Angeles Herald-Express

Although women won the right to participate in the political process through suffrage in 1920, women's achievements and actual participation, which had been so significant in the period between 1850 and 1920, actually declined throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Declining interest in social reform and a growing reaction against feminists and the woman's movement contributed to women's changing attitudes toward themselves and their roles in society. The new Freudian psychology seemed to confirm the sex role of the woman to be passive and dependent on men for fulfillment. The "new-style" feminist found her fulfillment in marriage and children as well as in a career, put preferred marriage.[6] The depression of the 1930s turned public opinion against working women; many men understandably feared loss of their jobs to women.

Women continued to make further gains in the professions during the 1920s, but some of these were lost during the following decade. In 1920, women constituted 11.9 percent of all professionals; that figure rose to 14.2 percent by 1930, but dropped to 13 percent by 1940.[7]

Women also continued to make significant gains in journalism during the 1920s, doubling their numbers in reporting and editing jobs to a total of nearly 12,000 or 24 percent of the profession. Most women still worked on women's pages in newspapers, in magazines, or in book publishing. On an average big-city staff of 30 to 50 men were three women, usually assigned to women's pages. In 1937, there were 300 women publishers among over 12,000; most of these had

inherited the position from their husbands and often relinquished control to others. During the 1930s, the number of women in journalism grew by only 1 percent.[8]

The fiction of the 1920s and 1930s reflect these attitudes toward the woman professional as well as the changes in the woman's self-concept. The woman journalist is single, courageous, compassionate, and hard working, but she is willing to trade a career for marriage. The competent, independent, determined, and "boyish" journalist of the turn of the century has become more dependent, less committed to her profession, less competent, beautiful--in other words, more "feminine." Clearly she reflects the new-style feminist of the twenties, and her relationship to a man is of paramount importance. Compassion in a woman, however, is not seen to be an asset; it is, in fact, responsible for professional failure.[9]

In the fiction of the 1920s and 1930s, the woman is clearly inferior to the male, as evidenced either by usual incompetence or by unusual ability for a woman and by the rarity of women in the profession. Frequent reference is made to the "only one": she is the "only" woman reporter on the paper, the "only" woman political correspondent in Europe, the "only woman publisher in town," and the "one" of two women employees on the paper.[10]

The autobiographies reinforce aspects of the fictional portrait. These women journalists still are often "the only one" and the "first" to achieve a particular position, interview, or privilege. They are most frequently assigned to cover the "woman's interest" whether they are working on a moderate-size daily, reporting Washington political and government news, or working as a foreign correspondent in France or China. They are compared to men, and frequently face barriers to assignments because they are women. They remain single,

rarely mention husbands or children if they marry, or quit their jobs, to have children. (Both women who quit their jobs returned to journalism soon after the births of their children, but to free-lance work, gradually working into full-time reporting.)

They are beginning to break out of those roles, however, and part with their fictional counterparts in several ways. The women are indefatigable workers; they carry additional responsibilities, which means that they all too often do a "job and a half." They are for the most part well educated, some at journalism schools, and they all write of being avid readers since childhood. Most said they wanted to be writers and newspaperwomen even while still children, and they all wanted careers even if they had to forego marriage. Three rose to positions as editors; one became the first woman city editor of a newspaper.

Most had strong women friendships and were strong supporters of women's rights. All mentioned (some more emphatically than others) the problems they confronted by being women in a man's profession; none were dissuaded from their professional commitment by such attitudes. On the contrary, they accepted and met such challenges. All the women were indeed the intelligent, reliable, courageous, imaginative, curious, skeptical, determined, persevering person with a nose for news and an irrepressible desire to write about contemporary issues that Curtis MacDougall in Interpretative Reporting says are characteristic of the professional journalist.[11]

These women were intelligent and educated. Of the eight women, four not only graduated from college but were also leaders and achievers. Fanny Butcher graduated from the University of Chicago and later enrolled in one of the first Great Books Courses taught by Mortimer Adler of the University of Chicago.[12] Bess Furman in her senior year at Kearney College, Kearney, Nebraska, was the

first woman editor of the college newapaper.[13] Mary Knight was the president of her senior class at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia.[14] Mary Margaret McBride earned her degree from the University of Missouri School of Journalism in two and a half years.[15] Margaret Anderson earned "high marks" at Western College at Oxford, Ohio, but left at the end of the third year (at age 19) to begin her professional life.[16] Edna Lee Booker also was impatient to begin her newspaper career; so she left college after only two years.[17]

Neither Agness Underwood nor Kathleen Ann Smallzried attended college, but they both worked strenuously to become good reporters. Underwood wrote that she learned much about writing from the hundreds of books that she read as she grew up. She was fortunate to have a woman mentor--a rare experience for a woman journalist; she learned about reporting from Gertrude Price, the society editor at the Los Angeles Record, where Underwood got her start.[18] For five years she copied, studied, and practiced rewriting other reporters' stories. She took dictation over the phone and eventually did some rewriting of stories for the paper. Smallzried said her editor made here rewrite stories ten times until they were right; she attributes her success as a writer to this training.[19]

Booker was so determined to be successful as a general assignment reporter for the China Review, an American daily in Shanghai, that she studied Chinese history and learned to speak Chinese although neither was necessary to the job. Her knowledge prepared her for later assignments that included the Chinese civil wars and the Chinese revolution. All the women continued to educate themselves throughout their careers. Knight disliked her beat covering Paris fashions for the United Press in France, and to relieve the boredom, she practiced doing interviews with anyone who would oblige her. This training later won her a position as staff reporter. Anderson got invaluable training for her eventual career as

publisher and editor of the Little Review, a prestigious literary review of the 1920s, by learning the "secrets of the printing room--composition (monotype and linotype), proofreading, make-up"[20] while she worked for Dial magazine as a book reviewer.

In contrast to the cultural stereotype of women as passive and dependent, independence and early commitment to careers characterize these women journalists, who all were living on their own apart from their families by their early twenties. Mary Margaret McBride wrote that from the age of five she was determined to work on a New York newspaper. Bess Furman wanted to be a newspaper reporter from her earliest childhood. She grew up as an apprentice on her family-owned newspaper. Her father published her first story--an account of the first party she attended--with a byline: "one of the little guests."[21] Anderson said as a child she wanted "self-expression": "I was born to be an editor. . . . It is this incessant, unavoidable observation, this need to distinguish and impose, that has made me an editor."[22] Smallzried said that as a child, she knew she wanted to be a writer, and by the time she reached high school, she knew she wanted to be a newspaper reporter.[23]

Agness Underwood is the only one of the eight women to come to journalism without prior commitment to the profession. She had an exceedingly difficult childhood, shunted between relatives and foster families. By the time she was sixteen, she was supporting herself and living independently from her family. She married at seventeen to escape one of her relatives who was insisting that Agness live with her. It was not until she had been married for seven years and had two children that she went to work for the Los Angeles Record as a telephone operator. She took the job to earn supplemental income for the family, but her commitment to journalism soon became just as intense as that of the other women journalists.[24]

Underwood was fortunate to find a mentor in Gertrude Price, the woman's page editor of the Record. She took a liking to Underwood and taught her how to be a reporter because she was impressed with Underwood's good memory, native curiosity, "thirst" for knowledge, a nose for news, and a desire to learn.[25] Underwood worked diligently to develop her ability.

Such determination, curiosity, ambition, and hard work was characteristic of these women. Knight said one thing she liked about her job was that she "loved to ask questions."[26] She said her mother, who had a difficult life herself, taught her to be courageous and confident. Smallzried's editor thought "she was made of iron and didn't need to sleep or eat."[27] Bess Furman once disguised herself as a girl scout to get an intimate view of the Hoover White House.[28] McBride said that one asset she had was "determination."[29]

Courage, self-confidence, imagination, independence, and determination all describe Margaret Anderson, publisher and editor of the Little Review, the literary magazine she started by herself at the age of 21. She had been writing book reviews in Chicago for only two years when she began the Little Review in 1914 because as she said, she sensed the importance of the literary movement that was getting underway in the world at that time.

Anderson's first job was as an assistant on an advice column for girls written by Clara Laughlin, who was also literary editor for a religious weekly, Interior, financed by Cyrus McCormick. Anderson soon began writing book reviews for the Interior as well as for the Chicago Evening Post, under literary editor Floyd Dell. At the same time, she began to do reviews for the Dial, another literary magazine. In 1913, she became the literary editor of the Interior, a position she kept to support the Little Review for the first few years of its publication. She raised the funds herself for the Little Review and refused an

offer from poet Amy Lowell to subsidize the magazine because she did not want to relinquish control. She took the Review to New York in 1917 and remained its editor until it ceased publication in 1929.[30]

The Little Review was immediately successful and was highly regarded by the literary world. It published the greatest of the new writers of the day: T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, Amy Lowell, Ernest Hemingway, Andre' Gide, Jean Cocteau, William Carlos Williams, Wyndam Lewis, and Ford Madox Ford were a few of the regular contributors. Despite its critical success, the Little Review was always short of funds. Anderson continually had to scrape together funds to continue publishing. Once, when she could not afford to both publish and pay the rent for her apartment, she chose to publish and gave up her apartment. At the time, she was supporting her mother, brothers and sisters. She moved them all to tents on the north shore of Lake Michigan. There she, her friend Jane Heap, her family, and poet Harriet Dean lived in five tents for six months. She sold whatever she could to raise money; she kept one blouse, one hat, and one blue tailored suit for professional meetings. On the skimpiest of budgets, and at times in bitter deprivation, Anderson and Heap managed to bring out the Little Review every month--

> almost literally brought it out ourselves. We hired the cheapest printer in New York, . . . We went to their shop in East Twenty-third Street and helped with the setting up, . . . On Sundays to push things along we often took our lunch and spent the whole day in the print shop, correcting proof, setting type, even folding pages for the binder. It was a good life except when the United States Post Office decided to suppress and burn the magazine. . . . We now had . . . nothing to live on. It was one of the periods when money absolutely abstained from coming in. Our provisions were also finished. There remained only a sack of potatoes. For three days we ate nothing but potatoes, . . .[31]

Not even the U.S. Post Office could deter Anderson from publishing. One of her greatest publishing achievements was the publication of James Joyce's

Ulysses, which ran in installments over three years, beginning in March 1918. Four times the Post Office confiscated and burned entire issues for containing what it claimed to be obscenities. Anderson received much abuse for several years for publishing Ulysses, including strong censure from the New York Times:

> The New York Times was the worst. We could never insert a word of publicity about Ulysses in its literary columns. Indeed the Times took pleasure in insulting us roundly as purveyors of lascivious literature. The Herald Tribune was almost as bad.[32]

The magazine was found guilty of publishing obscene material and fined $100 in a subsequent trial. Again the New York papers refused to come to the defense of the Little Review or to the defense of James Joyce. It was not until December 6, 1933, that the United States District Court, New York, in the famous decision rendered by John M. Woolsey lifted the ban on Ulysses.[33] When at last Ulysses began to be acclaimed as the greatest literary achievement of the twentieth century, the Times began to devote columns to James Joyce's masterpiece, but never mentioned the role of the Little Review in introducing it to the United States.

> From then on books of criticism appeared every week lauding Ulysses, interpreting it for the general public, often misunderstanding it, and always omitting to mention in spite of our copyright and our trial that it had first been published in the Little Review.[34]

It is just one of the stories of courage and tenacity and unsung accomplishments of women in journalism.

Fanny Butcher is another woman who failed to receive recognition for her work. Like Anderson, Butcher spent her journalism career reviewing books; she became so well known for her criticism that she was referred to in a New Yorker cartoon.[35] She, too, started her book reviewing career working with Floyd Dell, but she left the Chicago Evening Post to work on the Chicago Tribune. For seven years she wrote a weekly column, "Tabloid Book Reviews," and then in

1931 wrote a daily book column. She was convinced that Chicago needed a weekly newspaper book section, and she strived for twenty years to convince the Tribune to publish one. When at last in 1941 the Tribune decided to start a book section, a man was appointed editor; Butcher remained literary editor. It was a hard blow to Butcher.

> It is not easy for me to write dispassionately about the upheaval in my life when I was told that I was not to be the editor of the book section but was instead to write the leading review each week and a column about authors and their work. I had been literary editor for many years, and had by then a large, devoted reading public,. . .
>
> For years I had edited Christmas book sections that were never smaller than eight regular newspaper pages, sixteen tabloid size, and sometimes twice that large . . . .
>
> It seemed unfair to me that, when the idea of a book supplement had finally reached the fruit-bearing stage, I wasn't given charge of harvesting the crop . . . .
>
> I shuddered when I found that the editor of the new book section thought he was making a good impression on the publishers with his opening gambit of "I haven't read a book since Main Street," especially when I discovered that he meant it . . . .[36]

She remained loyal to the Tribune, the paper she loved and worked at for forty-nine years, in spite of the fact that she did receive many offers from other papers, one to edit the book section of the New York Herald-Tribune. She never became the editor of the Tribune Book Section, but she did like and respect Robert Cromie, who eventually replaced the first male editor.

The autobiographies show that in the 1920s and 1930s the "woman's interest" and features still remained the chief assignment for women reporters. Of the eight journalists, two were literary editors, only one was a general-assignment reporter (who later did become city editor), and five covered primarily women's news. But a great variety of jobs existed among these reporters of the "woman's angle." Furman was a political reporter for the Associated Press Washington Bureau: "I was in a place that completely satisfied me as a reporter. I loved the quick pick of the news nugget and speeding it along . . . ," she wrote.[37]

She arrived in Washington in 1928, and her beat included the White House family, especially Mrs. Hoover, the eight women in Congress, women's clubs, the Women's Bureau, the Children's Bureau, the Bureau of Home Economics, Red Cross, and the Public Health Bureau, among others. She liked to report on women; she was a strong supporter of women and women's causes and enthusiastically welcomed the Franklin Roosevelts and the "New Deal woman movement," which she wrote made her reporting assignments exciting and interesting.

> No newspaperwoman could have asked for better luck. Among the first to get first hand from the First Lady of the land, I also was blessed by an ample audience . . . .
>
> Mrs. Roosevelt not only made news for, but friends with, us women of the press . . . . She held regular press conferences in the White House beginning two days after the inauguration, and ending the morning of the day her husband died at Warm Springs, Georgia.[38]

The Roosevelt administration brought other women to government such as Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor. They were all part of Furman's beat.

Edna Lee Booker was a reporter on the China Press in Shanghai, China, and a correspondent for the International News Service. She was a general assignment reporter, but was usually assigned to women's stories. Through her initiative and her friendship with Mayling Soong (later Madame Chiang Kai-shek), she was able to arrange interviews with the great war lords of China as well as leaders of the Chinese revolution, including Dr. Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, Marshal Chang Tso-lin and war hero Wu Pei-fu. She also covered several battles of the civil war. Her report to Internews of the fall of Canton and the resulting downfall of the South China Republic (Sun Yat-sen's government) to the war lords scooped the world by twenty-four hours. She covered the catastrophic earthquake in Japan, and stayed in China until World War II.[39]

Smallzried got her training as a reporter writing obituaries (another "woman's beat") for seven years on the South Bend News-Times. When she finally got off that beat, she said she felt that she "like Lazarus, had been raised from

the dead."[40] She wanted to write "front-page stories"--to cover a murder, but she was assigned to features and women's news: church news, welfare agencies, PTA, and clubs. She eventually became the woman's page editor.

Mary Margaret McBride was hired by the New York Evening Mail to be a sob sister. After a year and a half of covering murder and divorce trials (for the emotional angle), she began to get other assignments, still chiefly women's news. The depression brought hard times to McBride, and she, like many reporters at the time, lost her job on the Daily Mail. She was successful working free lance, but the pressure brought on a nervous breakdown in 1931.[41]

Mary Knight began her career as a foreign correspondent covering fashions for the United Press Paris Bureau. She hated doing fashions but expanded beyond her assignments to cover designs, to investigate facts about the industry, and to interview those involved at all levels of the fashion industry. "In this way I kept my equilibrium and learned to become a full-fledged staff reporter."[42] As she had hoped, her training won her an assignment as a staff reporter. She usually did interviews of the famous, but she did cover other stories as well. Once, she disguised herself as a man to gain access to an execution by the guillotine.

> I had covered murders, suicides, brawls and bawdy houses without having my skirts militate against me, but here, at the last hour, I could not stand three minutes and see a man's head cut off because I was a woman!"[43]

She took a risk at that because in France it was against the law for a woman to wear a man's clothes (and vice versa). She got her story and became famous because of it. The radio in America dramatized the incident on "March of Time," and many newspapers ran it in headlines: "THE ONLY WOMAN TO HAVE DONE IT." She said it was the challenge of the male exclusiveness that made her do it.

> It was nothing but "cussedness" that made me do it--to "get even" with the French government for spoiling my chances of a good story by refusing me a permit to cover it, solely because I was a woman!"[44]

She was not the only woman reporter hounded by her sexual identity and a cultural stereotype that declared her unfit for many experiences and incapable for certain tasks thought to belong only to males. All the autobiographies mention struggles against such stereotypes. That frequently made the reporters' jobs more difficult or impossible. Knight also wrote that her entire life was affected by her father's deep disappointment that she was not born male.

> If he noticed me at all it was to remark, with a dour shake of the hands, "Why couldn't you have been a boy?"
>
> How frequently I heard this I do not know. But it was often enough to give me a deep sense of the shortcomings of being a girl. Something which I had in some way to make up for. Something which made me feel miserable and gave me a longing to convert myself by some magic, into a boy.[45]

When she was older, this wish expressed itself in her desire to "think more like a man."[46] Her experiences in reporting raised her consciousness to the inequities women face. When she was the only woman covering an important trial, the male reporters taunted her with patronizing remarks such as: "Too bad the UP isn't being covered on this story. Ought to have known better than to send a girl out to do a man's job. It's a swell story too." or "We're good eggs, we'll help you--hate to see the United Press get the razzberry for failing on a yarn like this."[47] On another story she interviewed seventy-nine prostitutes at a women's prison who were testifying against Charles "Lucky" Luciano. Her experience again reminded her of the injustice of women's position.

> If it is man's need, more than woman's, that makes for prostitution, then why shouldn't they stand more of the gaff than they do? . . . Why should a man who enters a house of ill fame be less a prostitute than the women who serve him?[48]

It was a man, however, who told her to be proud of her sex. When she left the UP for another job, the vice president said to her: "You're a tough guy, Mary--and a first class newspaperman, but don't ever be ashamed of being a woman."[49] She reported the incident as a sincere, uncondescending statement of respect.

Bess Furman said her job covering the women in Congress was made more difficult because of the attitudes toward women reporters. The AP men on Capitol Hill kept it as "holy ground." Eventually she did become the "first woman" to be extended the "courtesy of the floor of Congress," however, not without some embarrassment. While she was on the floor for the first time, the Representative from Oklahoma stood up and said: "Rising to a point of parlimentary procedure, I'd like to know who that young lady is up there and what she is doing."[50] She complained in her autobiography that ample arrangements would be made to accommodate the male reporters' needs, but arrangements were rarely made for the women of the press, in spite of the proven ability of many of the women reporters, who even at times proved greater ability than their male colleagues:

> Strong men threw up their hands at the idea of trying to explain Boulder Dam to one more newspaper reporter. They all told me that the only press person, man or woman, who had ever understood it was Ruth Finney of Scripps-Howard.[51]

Smallzried wrote that her editor was very helpful to her, but was "certainly skeptical of women as reporters."[52] Her male colleagues felt that women's place was in the home, and "chided us career girls for not marrying."[53] When she once suggested a good story to her editor, he took it from her and gave it to one of the male reporters.

> I never covered a fire. . . . I never got to one in my capacity as a reporter. . . because girls were not sent to fires. The reason for this is supposed to be something vaguely chivalrous, as that we might get killed. Actually however, girls aren't sent because the boys want to go themselves. Fires are the last frontier of hardy manhood.[54]

Edna Booker chalked up a few "firsts" during her career in China. Women were not allowed admittance to chambers of state in China, yet she managed to be the first woman newspaper correspondent to interview Governor Yen Shih-shan, a Chinese warlord of the Shansi province. Two other interviews made her the subject of a news item in the China Weekly Review:

> Miss Booker has the distinction of having gained the first interview ever granted to a foreign woman correspondent by either Chang Tso-lin, Mukden's war lord, or Wu Pei-fu, China's national hero.[55]

She was also the "only" woman on the staff of the China Press when she first was hired, and she was the "only" woman correspondent to cover the earthquake of 1923, which destroyed all of eastern Japan. Yet she, too, had to contend with such stereotypical attitudes as "A little gal like you can't take on such an assignment. . . . That is a man's job."[56] or "First thing a newspaper gal has to learn is to keep her mind, not her emotions, on the job."[57]

Butcher wrote that she was "only" one of two women in the local room during her early years on the Chicago Tribune because her editor felt that the "hard-crusty life of a newspaper was no place for fair womanhood."[58] She also wrote that she never went to the famous Chicago newspaper and literary hangout, Schloggl's, where the "Daily News boys" reigned, because "no females were allowed."[59] She did praise Floyd Dell, her editor at the Chicago Evening Post, for his strong support of women. Dell wrote a series of articles about the "Free Woman," which caused an uproar for his advocacy for sexual freedom for women and the right of women to smoke.[60]

When McBride was first hired on the New York Evening Mail to work as a sob sister, she was the "only" woman reporter on the paper, except for Grace Robinson, the woman's page editor. She complained that whenever a "sad" story came up, she was sent out. "The assumption that I was only good for one type of story made me feel like a sort of second-class citizen, . . ."[61] She came from a conservative background and did not approve of women's new morality of the 1920s, but still she was indignant when double standards were applied:

> When a Midwestern congressman proposed legislation making it a misdemeanor for any woman to smoke in public in the District of Columbia, I whipped up next day a series of protests from women's rights champions. The women were furious, not necessarily because they advocated women smoking but because they considered such legislation discriminatory and unfair. . . .
>
> What was happening I know now was that nervous men were trying to control the freedom-happy "weaker sex" by statutes before it was too late. . . .[62]

As the fiction of this period portrayed, compassion caused failure for women reporters and was considered by the autobiographers to be a weakness and unprofessional. McBride agonized over her desire to be a great newspaperwoman, but confessed that her compassion was partly responsible for her failure to live up to this dream:

> My very worst moment on a newspaper, I guess, was when a dying woman, swearing me to secrecy, confessed that she'd murdered her husband. What does a real newspaperwoman do with a piece of information like that? Perhaps I proved then that I wasn't a real newspaperwoman for I did nothing.[63]

Compassion was not part of the hard-boiled newspaper journalist's image.

Agness Underwood never let compassion interfere with her reporting, or at least she never admitted it. On the contrary, she wrote that despite her belief that the involvement of innocent children in court cases was a tragedy on modern life, she knew it made a good story. She arranged for news photos of the child in the Barry-Chaplin paternity suit. "It would require persuasive

powers greater that Portia's to convince a reporter that he should ignore news or photos when a youngster is the focal point in a controversy. . . ."[64] She was proud that her news photo was carried by publications throughout the country.

Underwood was not the "feminine" reporter the fiction describes, and her attitudes toward women journalists are in strong contrast to those of the other autobiographers. She may well be the exception that proves the rule. She was a city editor who had to make it in a man's world, which she did by combining an aggressive, "masculine" approach to reporting and management with a "feminine" deference to male superiors and co-workers. She frequently complains about "female wonders" in her autobiography. "I am no feminist" she declares in the opening sentence, and the first three pages are an attack on the claim that newspaperwomen are condemned as a class because they are females. When asked whether there should be more newspaperwomen, she responded: "I think there should be more good ones."[65] She wrote that she believed that ability rather than sex is the criterion used by editors to evaluate a reporter, and she cites her own hiring practices as proof:

> I still haven't hired a woman, and that forbearance doesn't arise from prejudice. If and when there's a spot and an available woman whose qualifications outweigh those of other applicants, men or women, she'll get the job.[66]

She praises Gertrude Price and Eddy Jo Bernal, her head copy "girl," but for the most part, she has few good words to say about female reporters or about women in general. "We have our erudition, urbanity, and civility. However, it is not a shop where ladylike reporters sit around daydreaming, hoping the city desk will beckon them to an assignment a month from next Tuesday."[67] She often refers to women reporters as "girl wonders," "those Eastern newspaperwomen, or "War-baby women reporters."

> One of these girl-wonders had been drooping around the press-room, listening to the hard-earned facts which other reporters telephoned their offices and then appropriating the overheard information in her own phone calls. Inevitably, the boys fixed her on the hijacking: by agreement they all telephoned a phony, and she fell for one of the oldest traps of all.[68]

Her insecurities seem to be with women rather than with men, as she so often reveals in her criticisms of other women journalists: "I suppose there are editors who think gals like that are wonderful. She now has an important job on a big Eastern publication. As a reporter she couldn't work for me five minutes."[69] She made many such complaints, and she also criticized Eleanor Roosevelt for her lack of cooperation with the press, surprising since most women reporters express gratitude for her special consideration of them. She got along well with the male reporters, extending them the understanding she often refuses women. She defends their weaknesses as part of the job: "The drive that makes some men good reporters and photogs is related to the drive that inclines them to take a drink." She also wrote that she never gave them away to their wives either. "Occasionally I receive a telephone call at home from an angry wife who wants to know where her husband is. If I know, I surely don't tell."[70]

With Underwood as the exception, the women autobiographers were strong supporters of other women and other women reporters. Most wrote of friendships with other women, some with the other autobiographers. McBride was grateful for the help and encouragement she received from Zoe Beckley, with whom she worked on the Daily Mail. She once worked on a feature story with Margaret Bourke-White, and she liked and admired Ishbel Ross, Emma Bugbee and Marguerite Moers Marshall of the Evening World, Catherine Brody and Marian Spitzer of the Globe, and Julia McCarthy of the Journal, even though she felt a keen rivalry with these top reporters. Bess Furman knew and liked McBride and worked with her on

the Child Conference. Furman's closest friend was AP reporter Sue McNamara, and she, too, worked with an liked Emma Bugbee. She was friends with women in Washington government, and was an ardent admirer of Eleanor Roosevelt. She enjoyed covering women's issues. Fanny Butcher was a strong advocate of women's causes; she knew and admired Margaret Anderson of the Little Review. She wrote strong praise for Harriet Monroe, who founded the magazine Poetry, A Magazine of Verse,

> the only little magazine in history, if I am not mistaken, to have survived three wars and a catastrophic national and world depression. The idea in 1912 of having a magazine devoted entirely to poetry and its criticism was Harriet Monroe's. . . . Harriet Monroe was a spinster in her early fifties when she conceived Poetry. . . . If any one who had never met her would ask what Harriet Monroe was like, the words, . . that would automatically pop out would be, "She's a wonderful woman." Too close, she was prickly, but she was also curious, courageous, and indomitable, mentally and physically--[71]

yet another professional journalist.

Margaret Anderson's friends included the giants of the literary world of the 1920s, but her best and lifelong friend was Jane Heap, who edited the Little Review with her. Those she admired most were women such as Harriet Monroe, Emma Goldman, the anarchist, and Harriet Dean, the poet. Mary Knight was another woman reporter who praised those women in the Washington of F. Roosevelt, especially Eleanor Roosevelt and Frances Perkins. Edna Booker wrote fondly and admiringly of the Chinese women such as Madume Wu, who was a courageous, strong, free woman with unbound feet, and the Soong women, who became the most influential women in China.

The image of the reporter as a single woman is somewhat borne out by the autobiographies; the woman is either single or silent about her personal or family life. Four of the women married and three had children, but they seldom mention their husbands or families in their books. In spite of this perhaps unconscious conformity to custom and cultural stereotype, the strong professional

commitments endured throughout their lives. Furman and Booker quit their jobs to have children, intending to stay home with them, but both were back to reporting within weeks of their babies' births. Underwood already had two children when she began to work for the Record. She begins her autobiography by saying that although she regards the woman's place to be in the home, "newspapering" is her life: "I'd be daffy if I thought I'd be content away from the newspaper profession."[72]

Fanny Butcher rarely mentioned her husband in her autobiography. The married women did not mention problems combining a career with marriage. McBride had men friends but never married (her autobiography ended before her radio career began). Margaret Anderson emphatically stated her strong intention to stay single: "I am no man's wife, no man's delightful mistress, and I will never, never, never be a mother."[73] But two reporters who chose careers over marriage expressed a certain sense of loss. Smallzried wrote:

> Everynow and then I got the idea that I could have a life of my own and do things like other people did, but Ahearn had a sixth sense about this and never failed to hand me an assignment that would take the house in which I wistfully planned to do other things.[74]

Knight believed she could not combine marriage with a newspaper career:

> I did want a home and children. I wanted everything that went with it--even if it didn't pan out. . . . But how could your whole life suddenly change the minute you promised to "love, honor and obey (perhaps)" a man who was to be your husband. . . Now that I am free there is so much else I want to do first. Try my wings--that's it![75]

As for the stereotype of the beautiful, feminine reporter, these busy women made few references to their clothes or looks. Butcher mentioned that Anderson was a remarkably beautiful woman, but Anderson, herself, mentioned her clothes only to note her poverty; she never mentioned her appearance except as it related to professional needs. Smallzried wrote in her usual ironic style that the

beautiful woman had a hard time in the newsroom because she was felt to be too distracting to the men. McBride wrote of the nuisance of finding the right clothes for a reporter. Knight hated working on Paris fashions but mentioned nothing about personal clothing--she did note that "skirts" did set the woman reporter apart. For the most part, these women concentrated on their work.

These autobiographies of eight women journalists whose careers span the decades of the 1920s and 1930s, when women first began to enter the professions in significant numbers, reveal strong, intelligent, courageous professionals. The growing dependence and declining professional commitment of women journalists portrayed in the fiction of this period is not reinforced in these personal histories. The women journalists are unfaltering in their determination to be independent and to pursue careers. The women who do marry and have children soon return to full-time careers; the others choose careers over marriage, with some expression of loss.

The autobiographies do show diversity of women's positions in their profession, but the women remain assigned primarily to features and women's news, as the fiction portrays. One woman does become the first city editor of a major newspaper. The image of the woman journalist as a rarity in the profession is reinforced in the autobiographies by the fact that all eight women are in some way the "only" woman or the "first" woman to achieve some position or distinction in journalism.

Both fiction and autobiographies associate women with stereotypes. The fiction tends to identify women stereotypically dependent on men. The autobiographies describe women's struggles against cultural stereotypes. All but one woman strongly support and identify with other women.

Women's activities so often have been omitted from the historical record,

a loss to all, but a crippling void for young women who have no models or heroines to guide and inspire them in their own struggles for self-fulfillment. These eight personal histories of strong, dedicated women who succeeded in a male profession at a time when society believed such women to be maladjusted, begin to correct this historical oversight and add to the record. The situation for women in the profession has greatly improved since those pioneer days, but the significance of the success of these courageous women remains important to us all.

FOOTNOTES

[1]See Marion Marzolf, Up From the Footnote (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1977) and Ishbell Ross, Ladies of the Press (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1936).

[2]Susan J. Henry, "Private Lives: An Added Dimension for Understanding Journalism History," Journalism History, 6:4 Winter 1979-80: 98-102

[3]Milton Albrecht, "The Relationship of Literature and Society," American Journal of Sociology, 59 (1954), 425-436. An examination of some of the viewpoints and theoretical assumptions of literature, which in most theories imply that literature reflects and influences society.

[4]The image of the woman journalist in American fiction is described in my paper on that topic. The conclusions from that paper are drawn upon for this paper, which is a continuation of that study. See Donna Born, "The Image of the Woman Journalist in American Popular Fiction 1890 to the Present" (Paper delivered at the Annual Convention, Association for Education in Journalism, Michigan State University, East Lansing, August 1981).

[5]Joanna Russ, "What Can a Heroine Do? or Why Women Can't Write," in Images of Women in Fiction, ed. by Susan Koppleman Cornillon (Bowling Green Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1972), pp. 3-20.

[6]Lois Banner, Women in Modern America--A Brief History (New York: Harcourt Jovanovich, Inc., 1974), p. 143.

[7]Ibid., p. 259.

[8]Marzolf, Up From the Footnote, p. 50-52.

[9]Born, "Image of the Woman Journalist in American Popular Fiction," p. 13.

[10]Ibid., p. 14.

[11]Curtis D. MacDougall, Interpretative Reporting (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1982), pp. 9-12.

[12]Fanny Butcher, Many Lives--One Love (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972), p. 79.

[13]Bess Furman, Washington By-Line (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 113.

[14]Mary Knight, On My Own (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1938), p. 21.

[15]Mary Margaret McBride, A Long Way From Missouri (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), p. 9.

[16]Margaret Anderson, My Thirty Years War (New York: Covici, Friede Publishers, 1930), p. 9.

[17]Edna Lee Booker, News Is My Job (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940), p. 4.

[18]Agness Underwood, Newspaperwoman (New York: Harper & Brothers Pub., 1949) p. 41.

[19]Kathleen Ann Smallzried, Press Pass (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1940), p. 54.

[20]Anderson, My Thirty Years War, p. 28.

[21]Furman, Washington By-Line, p. 113.

[22]Anderson, My Thirty Years War, p. 58.

[23]Smallzried, Press Pass, p. 23.

[24]Underwood, Newspaperwoman, pp. 17-32.

[25]Ibid., p. 41.

[26]Knight, On My Own, p. 17.

[27]Smallzried, Press Pass, p. 14.

[28]Furman, Washington By-Line, p. 61.

[29]McBride, A Long Way From Missouri, p. 163.

[30]Anderson, My Thirty Years War, pp. 22-41.

[31]Ibid., p. 157.

[32]Ibid., p. 175.

[33]James Joyce, Ulysses (New York: Random House, 1934), pp. ix-xiv. The text of Woolsey's opinion is reproduced on these pages. Anderson owned the first two copyrights to the United States' Edition of Ulysses--1914 and 1918.

[34]Anderson, My Thirty Years War, pp. 226-227.

[35]Butcher, Many Lives--One Love, shown in illustrations grouped between pp. 214-215. The cartoon, drawn by Helen E. Hokinson, shows a librarian extending a book to a borrower. The caption reads: "Hugh Walpole liked it, Fanny Butcher liked it, Wm. Rose Benet liked it, and Mrs. Roosevelt liked it, but is isn't very good."

[36]Ibid., p. 119.

[37]Furman, Washington By-Line, p. 88.

[38]Ibid., p. 153.

[39]Booker, News Is My Job, pp. 68-128.

[40]Smallzried, Press Pass, p. 113.

[41]McBride, A Long Way From Missouri, pp. 70-74 and pp. 104-106 and p. 175.

[42]Knight, On My Own, p. 93.

[43]Ibid., p. 154.

[44]Ibid., p. 158.

[45]Ibid., p. 3.

[46]Ibid., p. 54.

[47]Ibid., pp. 140-141.

[48]Ibid., p. 332.

[49]Ibid., p. 213.

[50]Bess Furman, Washington By-Line, p. 88.

[51]Ibid., p. 46.

[52]Smallzried, Press Pass, p. 54.

[53]Ibid., p. 75.

[54]Ibid., p. 273.

[55]Booker, News Is My Job, p. 55.

[56]Ibid., p. 41.

[57]Ibid., p. 137.

[58]Butcher, Many Lives--One Love, p. 40.

[59]Ibid., p. 65.

[60]Ibid., p. 71.

[61]McBride, A Long Way From Missouri, p. 74.

[62]Ibid., pp. 105-106.

[63]Ibid., p. 159.

[64]Underwood, Newspaperwoman, p. 181.

[65]Ibid., p. 3.

[66]Ibid., p. 15

[67]Ibid., p. 87.

[68]Ibid., p. 195.

[69]Ibid., p. 238.

[70]Ibid., pp. 290-295.

[71]Butcher, Many Lives--One Love, p. 91.

[72]Underwood, Newspaperwoman, p. 2.

[73]Anderson, My Thirty Years War, p. 4.

[74]Smallzried, Press Pass, p. 231.

[75]Knight, On My Own, p. 54.